

Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee



**1424 Blakely Dam Road
Royal, Arkansas 71964**

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD: Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee Minutes

DATE: November 2, 2015

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m. by Dan Watson, Chairman

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:

Stacy Sigman, Resource Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Jason Mothershed, Facility Manager, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Bill Jackson, Supervisory Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office
Amy Shultz, Park Ranger, Lake Ouachita Field Office

Members Present:

Bill Barnes	Rick Stokes	Howard Wright
Al Gathright	Dan Watson	
Tammi Spurlin	Jerry Williams	

Minutes: The minutes from the October 5, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

Announcements: Dan W. related Phillip C. would be unable to attend the meeting due to his son's birthday party, but would attend the meeting in January.

Friends of Lake Ouachita (FOLO): Al G. stated the installation of playground and courtesy docks is complete. The pavilion is still scheduled to be installed. Al further related he, along with Jason M., had received an e-mail from the installation company stating FOLO is being charged another \$800.00 for the second trip the playground installers had to make to the site because parts of the playground had not been shipped from the manufacturer originally. Bill B. inquired if all the pavilion equipment should be inventoried prior to the installation. Rick S. stated FOLO did not receive an inventory list of the shipment, so they would have no way of knowing if all parts were shipped. Al stated he would send a response to the company and try to get them to drop the charge. Bill B. said he believed the installation company should not be out this expense, it should be the manufacturer that should have to pay the additional \$800.00, since it was the manufacturer's fault the equipment had not been shipped originally. Stacy S. stated the Corps would begin installing the base for the playground soon. Al related the courtesy docks, that had been installed, could be moved in and out depending on water level. Stacy

stated the Corps was looking into purchasing a small ramp to attach to the docks to make it easier to access. Dan W. shared his appreciation to the Corps for purchasing recognition signs that will be installed near the docks, playground equipment and pavilion, recognizing FOLO's contributions of the facilities. Al stated that FOLO has not held a formal board meeting to discuss how to spend the remaining funds in the campground account, but they were in agreement to keep funds to use for matching grant money for projects to benefit the project. There is currently a balance of approximately \$65,000.00 in the account.

Discussion of Mission Statement: Dan W. inquired if Stacy S. had received any updates on the review of the new mission statement for LOCFC? Stacy replied that there had been no further information from the District Office concerning the mission statement.

General Discussion:

Behind the Scenes Tour: Dan W. thanked Bill J. for providing the "Behind the Scenes Tour" of the project area and for taking Tammi S. and himself on the extensive tour of the lake. Dan went on to explain he had made several notes and asked that Bill J. get a chance to review them to make sure the content was correct, then he would post them for the other committee members to read.

Usage of "Drop Box" for LOCFC documents: Dan W. informed the committee members that he had not had a chance to set the "Drop Box" up yet for the committee members to use to access the various LOCFC documents.

Corps of Engineers Report: Jason M. related the Joplin Campground underground high voltage electrical line replacement project was moving at a faster pace than had been predicted. The trench for the last leg-of-line being replaced will be dug in Joplin this week. All the cable has been installed, and the electrician will be working on the new lines, and should have electrical service to the area by mid-December. Jason related he had contacted GSA regarding the removal of old equipment from the project through a public sale of the materials, (wastewater treatment plant at Crystal Springs Campground and old filter from the Tompkins Bend wastewater treatment plant, etc.), the GSA representatives stated they were almost ready to post online for potential bidders. Jason further related the maintenance staff would be moving to Brady after completing the Joplin electrical work in order to begin working on relocating the raw water intake structure for the Brady Mountain Water Treatment Plant.

Bill J. related the Park Rangers were busy installing new island and point markers around the lake, also installing new directional signs in the recreation areas. Bill shared that operation and maintenance responsibilities of the Lena Landing Campground has been transferred to North Shores Resort and Marina. The campground will be part of the North Shores Resort and Marina commercial lease area and under their management. A number of years ago, a partnership was established with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for the operation and maintenance of the boat launching facility, with the expansion of the lease area, under the previous management when it was known as Navy Landing, the Lena Landing Campground became, an "island" for the Corps to manage. Upon completion of the cost-analysis comparison with the Corps maintaining operation and maintenance of the campground versus

leasing the area to North Shore Marina and Resort, it revealed that the cost benefit would be to allow the Resort to manage the area.

Al G. asked if the erosion area along the Gap Creek portion of the ADA trail had been fixed. Jason stated the equipment operator installed rip-rap and believes this should fix the problem.

Bill J. stated there were changes coming in 2016 for the Corps' recreation use fee program. Under the new requirements, the Corps will be required to compare use fee rates with other recreation areas within a 60 mile radius versus the previous 30 mile radius for both camping and day use facilities. The Corps is now authorized to sell/issue the "America the Beautiful" passes as well. In addition to these passes being accepted and recognized for use of Corps facilities, there have been additional passes added to the program as well.

Project Progress Reports:

LOViT: Al G. stated Mitzi Cole, U.S. Forest Service will begin walking each leg of the trail and will access and create a master list for signage needed on the trail. They will begin walking the trail tomorrow. Al further related there are still a few benches and plaques to install along the trail.

Projects:

AED: No report

Fishing Tournament Weigh-In: Rick S. related he had had the opportunity to discuss the proposed portable weigh-in station with Brett Hobbs, Arkansas Game and Fish, recently and Mr. Hobbs related that most tournament organizations already have their own set up for the various tournaments. Mr. Hobbs went on to suggest a better project for the committee to pursue may be to seek a chance to establish a "habitat boat" for the lake. The two boats that the Arkansas Game and Fish currently have, stay booked up, and are currently being used in the Northwest part of the State.

Committee members discuss if there was a need to stop trying to pursue the proposed portable fishing tournament weigh-in station and seek opportunities to establish a "habitat boat" on the lake instead. Rick S. stated he would get specs on a habitat boat used in Louisiana. Bill B. suggested putting out a request to all marinas for a running barge to be donated to FOLO for use as a habitat boat. Owner would get a tax credit for donating the boat. Bill B. went on to say, Mountain Harbor would offer a slip for the boat to be stored, at no charge to FOLO.

Demolition of Out of Date Facilities: No report.

Recycling: Tammi S. stated that although a recycling program in the recreation areas would be a good thing, in order for the program to work successfully, someone would need to be hired to empty the recycling containers when they became full. Bill J. stated he would contact the State Park to see who empties their recycling containers. Bill B. suggested the Lions Club or Optimist Club has helped with recycling at Mountain Harbor. Bill B. went on to say that the recycling facilities are making it hard to support recycling by limiting the items accepted. They will no longer accept glossy finished cardboard.

Tammi S. volunteered to recycle the cardboard and newspapers from the Lake Ouachita Field Office to a recycling center once a month.

Non-Potable Water: Rick S. stated he had not been able to discuss the possibility of connecting non-potable water to the restroom at the Brady Mountain Boat Ramp to save in having to use potable water for the flushing of toilets.

Campsite Evaluations: Dan W. inquired about adding a column for pull-through access to the spreadsheet. Bill J. related that he would ensure a new column would be added to the spreadsheet to indicate what campsites could be converted to pull-through campsites.

Donation Box: Stacy S. shared he had spoken with a friend at Raystown Lake, and they had only collected approximately \$700.00 per year in a donation box located at their Visitors Center, which is a very popular location for visitors to visit and learn more about Raystown Lake. Stacy recommended doing a test run with a donation box at a busy campground to test the feasibility of these boxes. He went on to say, the sign accompanying the donation box should tell a story of what the funds will go towards. Rick S. recommended placing a sign by donation box targeting a specific project in the recreation area that needed funded.

Comments: Bill J. related the campground reservations had begun and the 6-month reservation window for the summer season was now open. Bill J. further related Dennis Norris, Chief of Operations, Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), would be retiring in December, but would be returning to his previous position until his replacement had been chosen for the position. Bill further related Jerry Lawrence, Facility Manager, Ouachita Project Management Office would be retiring the end of December as well and he is currently working on the park attendant contracts for the area lakes before retiring.

Bill B. stated Mr. Richard Davies, Director of Parks and Tourism, would be retiring December 1st, and Kane Webb, a veteran journalist and member of Governor Asa Hutchinson's staff, would be succeeding Mr. Davies as Director of Parks and Tourism. Bill B. stated Mr. Webb is a very good person for the job. Bill B. went on to say the Director of Parks, Assistant Director of Parks, and the photographer for Parks and Tourism are all retiring at the end of the year, and there will be a lot of new employees at Arkansas Parks and Tourism.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.